

News- SOCIAL Letter ACTION

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Presbyterians Speak Their Mind

The following statement presented to the Synod of Alabama of the Presbyterian Church, U.S. (Southern) at the 1950 meeting and adopted by that body, is of such importance that it is summarized here for the benefit of the readers of *Social Action News-Letter*. It is printed from *The Presbyterian Outlook*. See Editorial comment on page 2, column 1 of this issue. **The Editors.**

"Christian relations are based on two premises. The first is that there is an absolute social ethic. The fact that two professing Christians have widely divergent attitudes toward social problems does not entitle each to call his attitude Christian. The absolute Christian ethic may be found somewhere between them, or more likely, somewhere beyond them. Our aim is to emancipate ourselves from the prepossessions of sectional, vocational, and class interests and gather about our plain spoken Scriptures for Christ's counsel to specific problems.

"The church is a great leveler. Without it we speak not the bias of lawyers or pipefitters, bankers or farmers, but the humble utterances of Christ's men. Therefore, we can manifest unanimity of spirit without requiring uniformity of opinion. We shun no issues on the grounds that they are controversial; quiescence is not harmony, and harmony at the expense of justice is dearly bought. Neither can we, in good conscience, beg a question on the basis that it is economic, political or social. To do so is to limit the employment of our faith to the fueling of temple fires, and return the words of the prophets unto them void. In human situations in all areas there are details of living over which technicians must preside but in all areas the church must assert the Christian principle.

"Christian Relations has this second premise. It is that society's points of tension shall find no permanent ease from those churches and agencies that have lost consciousness of the Sovereignty of God. Hence the Presbyterian Church comes to the front as a means of a redemptive society. We have not yet usurped God's prerogative of bringing in His Kingdom in his own due time. We have claimed to be nothing more than artisans under his direction. But divine reliance has faded into human reticence. That which we would avoid we call providential. When John C. Calhoun so labeled slavery, Henry Clay replied, 'To call a generation of slave-trading pirates a mys-

(Continued on Page 4, Col. 2)

A Church And Community Clinic

The experimental Church and Community Clinic held at Henderson, Ky., November 13, 14, 15 was well worth the time, effort and planning that went into it.

One's evaluation begins with the recognition of the cooperative work of a fine local committee which gave community undergirding to the venture. Members of the committee were — Charles E. Dietze, Henderson, chairman, Allen S. Estill, Mt. Carmel, Ill., Leslie L. Bowers, Dawson Springs, Ky., Arthur W. Lumley, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Sharp of Evansville.

Of the 37 churches which had been circularized with promotional materials four different times, 14 had delegations at the clinic. In several instances there were as many as seven from one church.

The total registration of 70 included representatives from 14 different community agencies in addition to the program participants of those agencies. The registrations also included representatives from the Methodist, Baptist and Presbyterian churches of Henderson.

While figures cannot tell the whole story they do give a good picture of the constituency which participated and was reached.

Probably outstanding features of the two-day meeting can be summed up as: 1. The panoramic view of the programs and work of community agencies impressed church leaders with the fact that the welfare of people was basic in their objectives; 2. Resources of churches and agencies were lifted up so that each saw what the other had to offer for the common good; 3. A realization that there are cooperative community ventures operating successfully; 4. Discovery of ways by which any church, large or small, urban or rural, rich or poor, may initiate and carry on a program of action in church and community relationships for the benefit of the total community.

R. E. M.

Wanted

A job and housing assurance in the Great Lakes region or Northwest for a refined, middle-aged Latvian DP couple now living in a hot semi-arid climate and needing a colder, damp climate for reasons of health. Intelligent, upright, conscientious, industrious and trustworthy. Husband speaks English—wife is learning. Trained for professions but will accept work as domestics. For details write Department of Social Welfare, 222 South Downey Avenue, Indianapolis 7, Indiana.

Who Wants War?

War has been in the past and still is the extension of diplomacy by other means. It occurs when a state or states believe that the national interests can be attained more quickly, or completely, or certainly, or cheaply than by other available means.

For one or more of such reasons some would doubtless welcome, if not seek, war today. Among the millions of people pushed out of eastern Europe seem to be elements who hope for war as the only way by which they may return to their homes. And many now in the Soviet satellite states are reported to see in war their only prospect of freedom.

Clause A. Putman, president of the National Manufacturers, was quoted by Robt. S. Allen in the *New York Post* (Oct. 6) as having said to the President's Committee on Mobilization Policy that the present economic tension is unbearable and must be ended, adding "A preventive war would be one way to end this intolerable situation." And Otto Seyferth, president of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce is quoted as agreeing: "Personally, I feel the same way. We've got to get this over with some time and I feel the sooner the better."

But the official policy of the United States is, at least for the present, to maintain peace at all costs. What about the policy of Russia? The Communists have consistently maintained that their ends will inevitably result in war against the capitalist interests. As this thesis has been developed by Lenin and Stalin the Communist revolution is continual war against these interests.

The crucial question now is whether this means that Russia seeks a global conflict, or whether she has evolved a type of war which is new, difficult to resist, and thus far alarmingly successful. The latter seems to be the case. We named it "cold war." But the Russians invented it. It seems to serve well their ends. We have not invented an effective counter-strategy. Hence some are endeavoring to convert this new type of war into the only kind of war we are at present prepared to wage. Yet it is possible that we might "win" the conventional type of war on a global scale and still lose this one. It is also possible that we would lose both.

What evidence is there that Russia intend to avoid all-out war and yet continue to wage her kind of war against what Communists call the "capitalist, imperialist warmongers"? Perhaps no one outside the Politburo knows Russian in-

(Continued on Page 3, Col. 3)

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Editorial Staff

James A. Crain Walter W. Sikes
Mrs. Ruth Estes Milner

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The Alabama Report

Many of our readers no doubt will be surprised that a Southern religious body should adopt such a forthright statement on social issues as the one approved by the Alabama Synod of the Presbyterian Church, U.S. and summarized on page 1 of this issue.

The Southern Presbyterian Church is generally regarded as socially conservative. Yet the statement of the Alabama Synod is by no means a conservative document.

The statement declares that the church can no longer evade its responsibility for social issues by begging the question that these are matters of economic, political or social concern and therefore not the church's responsibility. Social conditions are not due the operations of Providence, but are man-made.

The Synod declares that Communism is often born out of the desperation that men face in a materialistic society. At one point the statement points to a Southern Presbyterian minister whose sermon widely published over the South, made many extravagant statements about Socialism but his criterion for judging evil was sacrosanct capitalism and not Christian relations . . . Sermons of this type give some credence to the charge by the Communists that the visible church is the extreme right wing of bourgeois society." That is plain speaking about one of the influential pastors of the denomination!

The Synod sees militant Protestantism as the antidote for the totalitarian pattern set by the Roman Catholic Church, at the same time it warns against unthinking acceptance of creeds, reliance on the clergy and the assumption that God has delivered all truth to one religious communion.

We have already commented in the summary of the statement on the unreality of the Synod's handling of the race problem. Its analysis is excellent. It recognizes that times have changed, that a new generation is arising, that trouble is in the offing, but it cannot bring itself to declare unequivocally for equality of rights and opportunities. Perhaps it could not do so now without alienating a large segment of its constituency. Even so, it has made a notable contribution to Christian social responsibility.

J. A. C.

Is Soviet Policy Changing?

Is Soviet policy toward the Western world undergoing a change? Some informed observers see evidence that it is, though it would be foolish, they say, to assume that Communist long range objectives have changed. But Communist leaders have shown themselves to be realists in dealing with international situations and often have modified or changed their policies to meet changing conditions. Here are some of the facts that seem to argue that the Soviets are modifying their course in international affairs.

In the first place, it is no longer possible to conceal the fact that the Soviet Union has suffered a serious loss of prestige in the Korean affair. There can be no doubt that the North Koreans, weaponed and equipped by Russia, got the nod from Moscow before launching their attack upon South Korea on June 23. However, earlier in the year the Russian delegates had walked out of the U.N. over refusal to seat the Chinese Communist delegation instead of the Chinese Nationalists. This proved to be the worst sort of tactical blunder. When the United States laid the Korean crisis before the U.N. the Russians were not there to exercise the veto. Anyway, they had expected the U.S. forces to be kicked into the sea by the larger and better equipped North Koreans. The Soviet Union acted quickly to recoup the blunder but it was too late. Suddenly the Koreans found themselves facing not only American troops, but an army fighting under the flag of the United Nations. The North Koreans had been branded as aggressor and it was plain that if Russia wanted war she could have it. In this situation Mr. Vishinsky adopted a conciliatory attitude. In the current session of the General Assembly the truculence and bad manners that have marked Soviet and satellite delegations in the past are noticeably missing. Instead, Mr. Vishinsky reassures the U.N. that Communism can live at peace with the rest of the world.

In the second place, there is some evidence that Russia has not been able to convince Mao Tse-tung that it is to his interest to intervene in the Korean affair. This may account for the puzzling situation that has developed along the Korean-Manchurian border.

United Nations World points out that Mao has his hands full at home trying to crush a quarter million Kuomintang guerillas, plus, flood, famine and skyrocketing inflation. Also Mao is resisting Stalin's demands for immediate full socialization, fearing what it might do to the 490 million Chinese farmers who would fight for their tiny plots of land. Some observers believe that the Russians have intentionally bungled the campaign for the seating of the Chinese Communists in the U.N. in order to penalize Mao for his independent attitude.

Nor has Soviet policy been wholly successful on the European front. The huge May Day youth demonstration planned

for East Berlin largely fizzled, as did a similar affair planned for the upper Ruhr. Western Europe is making rapid economic recovery, people are living better, life is looking up and Communist Party membership is going down. *U.S. News and World Report* (Oct. 6) deflates reports that the Russians are building a huge army in East Germany. Detailed intelligence reports to Allied military authorities in West Germany indicate that the "People's Police" is not an army, but a polite force that receives no military training. Its personnel, about 100,000, would be needed to keep Communists in power if war came. The only Communist military forces in Germany, aside from 325,000 crack Soviet troops, are "Preparedness Units," consisting of about, 60,000 men organized in battalions of 1200 men or less. They are said to be lightly armed and poorly trained. The main source of officer supply is said to be the old German *Wermacht* officer corps, who are not trusted by the Communists. A field-grade Russian officer is said to be attached to each unit to keep an eye on the political situation.

Perhaps the most effective restraint on Russian intransigence has also grown out of the blunder in walking out of the U.N. Secretary Acheon has proposed, and it seems likely to be adopted, a plan whereby each U.N. member nation designates a part of its armed forces as U.N. units, with observers teams ready to fly to any area where war break out, and if action by the Security Council is blocked by veto the Assembly can be called within 24 hours. The veto-free Assembly could, by a two-thirds vote, dispatch troops anywhere in the world.

These are some of the factors that seem to indicate that perhaps the "Cold War" is taking a turn for the better and that peace — at least an armed peace — may be possible.

J. A. C.

Social Action Notes

Fayetteville, Ak. The Community and World Service Committee of the First Christian Church sponsored an open forum on October 24, on Amendment 41 to the state constitution to be voted on November 7, providing for a state educational appropriation for each child attending public schools.

St. Louis, Mo. The Social Education-Action committee of the St. Louis Disciples Council urged Disciples to go to the polls on election day and supplied mimeographed and printed records of candidates. The committee has signed an assurance for a DP family and will support and promote observance of Race Relations Sunday sponsored by the Metropolitan Church Federation.

Little Rock, Ark. The state commission on Social Welfare has adopted a program for 1950-1951 calling for seminars in One Day Conventions, preaching on social issues, visual aid in temperance education, support of statewide prohibition, education for Christian attitudes in race relations, and observance of social education special days.

On Social Frontiers

The Meaning of Work. Thirty representatives of labor, management and the church met in New York on October 30, to launch American participation in a three year international study of the meaning of work. The New York Committee is headed by Dr. John Oliver Nelson of Yale Divinity School. The committee plans to make a preliminary report to the International Study Committee next summer.

* * *

Prices Going Up. The price of 28 important industrial and agricultural commodities rose at the rate of 1.4 percent per month from January to June, but in the month following the invasion of South Korea prices advanced 12 percent, says *Economic Outlook*. In the 17-week period June 23 - October 20, the prices, of these 28 strategic commodities rose 25 percent. For example, zinc, which cost 8.7c per pound at the World War II peak, but shot up to 18.2c per pound after the Korean war broke out. Steel scrap sold at \$18.75 per ton in Chicago at World War peak price, was standing at \$37.50 on June 23, and was up to \$40 by October 20. Rubber was 22.5c per pound at the World War II peak, was selling for 28.2c on June 23, but by October 20, had risen to 64.5c. Yet some people say "Don't enact an excess profits tax!"

* * *

Death of an Idea. The cause of truth in journalism lost a valuable ally when George Seldes announced the suspension of *In Fact* in October. A 9" x 12" four-page weekly printed on newsprint, *In Fact* tore the disguise off many so-called respectable newspaper and revealed its sham and hypocrisy. George Seldes believes that a large section of the press suppresses news when it is to their interest or the interest of their class to do so. If *In Fact* sometimes seemed to ride its hobby too hard, at least it was in the interest of truth, not falsehood. Rising prices was too much for the little sheet at the modest price of \$2 a year. Many subscribers hope that Mr. Seldes may be able to re-establish the paper on a sounder basis.

* * *

A Hint to Southerners. The Southern Regional Council is one of the most important organizations in the country. It was organized by Southerners for Southerners and for the benefit of the South. Its purpose is to attain through research and action the ideals and practices of equal opportunity for all peoples in the South. On its board are some of the outstanding citizens of that section of the nation. Word comes from its officers at Room 432, 63 Auburn Avenue, N.E., Atlanta, Georgia, that certain grants which it had received from foundations to help the work get started have expired and that from now on the Council is on its own. That means it now must look to the South for support. People who believe in its program will know what to do.

In Zionsville

A good illustration of what can be accomplished on the way of cooperative effort on the part of churches is to be found in a small community a few miles out of the city of Indianapolis.

In Zionsville with a population of about 1300 persons there are the usual three or four churches of various religious faiths. Also, as usual, it is not possible to draw all of the churches of the community into a piece of cooperative work — but two of the churches, the Methodist and the Christian have been able to develop a project which is proving mutually beneficial to both groups as well as demonstrating that the small community does have some common ground upon which all concerned persons can meet for community action.

The project takes the form of a Sunday evening fellowship and forum which functions for a period of six weeks during the fall. At 5:20 p. m. everyone — fathers, mothers, children, young people, single adults — come together for an evening snack (carry-in style) in one of the cooperating churches. The supper hour is followed by a period of worship which begins about 6:20. At seven o'clock the gathering divides up into smaller groups according to age and interest. A teaching and activity period is planned for the children; the young people meet with their leaders for discussion; interest groups are set up for parents and other adults. The evening on which the writer participated one such group was following a study and discussion of the home and church working together for children, for teen-agers, for community betterment, etc. Another group was following a Bible study unit.

The evening's program of fellowship, worship and study closes with the termination of the group sessions at eight.

The buoyant spirit and warmth of the fellowship impressed one with the feeling that the venture is building a unity in that little community which will be the foundation for other attempts at community redemption.

News Notes

Danbury, Conn. The Church of Christ (Disciples) observed World Order Sunday, October 24, as "World View Day," with a sermon by Dr. Robert M. Hopkins, and addresses throughout the day by Dr. George Earl Owen, missionary Argentina, Mr. Maxwell, a returned missionary to Korea, and Mrs. Ralph Palmer, missionary candidate.

Jacksonville, Ill. The centennial convention of the Illinois Disciples of Christ was marked by two seminars on social education and action under the direction of the state commission on Christian Action and Community Service.

Los Angeles. The social action committee of the Christian Churches of Southern California, Mrs. Leslie Dean, chairman, carries a column in *The Unified Informer*, publication of the Christian Missionary Society of Southern California.

Who Wants War...

(Continued from Page 1, Col. 3)

tentions. But a number of facts and observations seem to confirm this thesis.

There is considerable evidence that Russia desires and intends to avoid all-out war. Harrison E. Salisbury, veteran correspondent of the *New York Times*, in October wrote a series of articles from Moscow after a trip through Poland and a period of observation in Russia. In these he declares that exhaustive investigation drives him to conclude that there are no Russian plans for or expectation of war in the immediate or remote future. Despite the surprise with which most Americans may greet his statements, he says, every thing seems to indicate that the Russian officials and people do not expect the present situation to deteriorate into war.

Among the facts cited in proof of this conclusion are the great increase in consumer goods available to the public, from automobiles to shoes, many of which require materials that would be imperative for war production. The quality of these goods is rising and the cost is going down. Billions of rubles are being spent in remodeling and beautifying Soviet cities, especially Moscow, a policy that would hardly make sense if they felt war imminent. Furthermore there are no signs of Soviet efforts to induce volunteers for military service beyond the required period of conscription, although "there is no neglect of military strength." Mr. Salisbury says, "I have heard of no Russian who in private conversation or publicly has suggested that the Soviet Union should wage a 'preventive war' against the United States, or who has proposed using the force of Soviet arms to produce revolution in the United States or, for that matter, in Western Europe."

These conclusions of Mr. Salisbury are supported by the analysis of the German situation by the *U.S. News & World Report* (Oct. 6), which is discussed in another column of this issue. It is summed up in these words: "Inside story of the East German Army shows it is about 90 per cent myth. It can't start anything."

The over-all pattern of this Soviet "war" seems to be to support and guide, by use of native leaders, the revolutionary forces in all areas where basic dissatisfaction with the status quo has conditioned the peoples to seek a change. In such areas, which include most of Asia, all of Cen-

(Continued on Page 4, Col.1)

Who Wants War...

(Continued from Page 3, Col. 3)

tral Europe, and increasingly the periphery of Africa, Russia has sought to convince these revolutionary forces that she is their hope. The Soviet Union has paced her bets on these rising forces of fundamental change. And in our effort to resist Russia at every point, we have been jockeyed into the untenable position of betting on the old forces which were on their way out. Cases in point are Chiang Kai-shek, Syngman Rhee (who has just been asked by the Assembly of Korea to resign, after refusing three times to confirm the premier of state designated by him), and Bao Dai in Indochina, whose regime is rapidly degenerating. And until events drove a wedge between him and the Kremlin, we took the same attitude toward Tito of Yugoslavia.

The difficulties of operating against such strategy are great and perilous. So far the United States has not been very successful, despite the apparent victory in Korea. The attack on the Administration in general and the State Department in particular in the recent election for their "failure" in foreign policy has much to justify it. But the tragedy is that most of this attack has been based upon the premise that our failure lies not in our betting on the wrong horse but in not betting more heavily on *him*.

Two problems of great magnitude demand solution, if we are going to reverse the course of this conflict. The one is to invent and implement a global strategy which will persuade the restless masses of Asia, Europe and Africa and their leaders that their demands for economic betterment and for national independence will be better served by it than by alliance with Russia. This cannot be done by the "Western nations," much less by the United States, alone. It must be done if at all, collectively by representatives of those peoples involved in collaboration with the western democracies. Perhaps it must be done through the United Nations.

The other problem, which is an American problem particularly, is to inform the people of the United States of the real situation so as to persuade them to support an intelligent, expensive, and long time program in which our fortunes will be involved but over which we will not have full control.

W.W.S.

Presbyterians Speak...

(Continued from Page 1, Col. 1)

terious providence is an insult to the Supreme Being.'

"We forget that oppressive conditions are the makings of aggressive men, not chance or divine fiat. Aggression is met with counter-aggression. God has so ordained and empowered us. . ."

The committee reported that it had studied many problems but was prepared to submit findings only on Communism, the Roman Catholic Church, and the Negro people.

On the subject of Communism the committee stated that of all types of government representative democracy most closely approximates what we conceive to be the political expression of Christianity. "Democracy is a set of delicately balanced scales which Christianity forbide a man to tip to his own advantage. By its very nature democracy permits the operation of the undemocratic spirit. . . Communism didn't spring full-grown from the head of Stalin. It is indigenous to any materialistic society, nurtured upon the tissues that capitalism leaves unclean. . . By believing that world problems are economic rather than spiritual and by desiring security above liberty we either open our minds to Marxism or we create such intolerable condition that Communism appears to be the most reasonable antidote."

"Our church has very right to examine political and economic philosophies and point out their defects in the light of Christian principles. But our church has no right to champion one class against another nor to equate a particular economic theory with either representative democracy or the Christian way of life. . ."

On the subject of Roman Catholicism the Report concedes that there are "many devout Christians in the Roman Church and that there is a measure of truth in her teaching. But we believe that democracy cannot survive nor Protestantism thrive in a Roman-controlled country. Recent history has evidenced the fact that a totalitarian church prepares the minds of people for a totalitarian government. The Roman Church has established the thought forms and the totalitarians have merely moved in and transferred the allegiance to themselves."

This condition is to be met by militant proclamation of Protestant doctrines, taking care in the process not to create "the Roman Catholic mind-set in a Protestant framework." There should be no mincing of words and no avoidance of issues. "Let the people know the difference between the two churches and the consequences if we lose." The Report goes on to support Protestants and Other Americans United for Separation of Church and State and to oppose the appointment of a representative to the Vatican and the

use of tax funds for support of parochial schools.

On the subject of human rights and race relations the Report is least satisfying. It describes the attitude of the church toward the problem in the language of John Randolph, "Our policy has been one of wise and masterly inactivity." Admitting that there has been improvement in the condition of the Negro in the South in the last decade, the Report declares that "the Presbyterian Church has not been nearly so important an instrument as have been the secular agencies organized for the purpose of breaking Southern tradition by appeal to the Federal courts." The Negro in the South is in a dilemma: "We encourage him to be clean but rent him houses with no bath facilities; to be healthy in moldy shacks on unpaved streets, in bottom lands; to dress properly on a pauper's income; to pay taxes when there is no property to own; to finish his schooling when he has to work to eat; to vote when registrars ask impossible questions; to love his country which shows little affection for him."

It is on the solution that the Report flounders. Admitting that the traditional Negro has been replaced by "a new generation that we do not understand, . . . ambitious, smart in the tricks of the world, less religious and far less superstitious, determined to move out of his sordidness, bitter toward the white man who suppresses him," wanting the opportunity of looking out for himself and unwilling to accept any longer the white man's paternalism, the committee frankly faces the fact that "segregation is living on borrowed time." It suggests that since the constitution seems to be "considerably more active than conscience the church might have to adjust its morality to measure up to the *mores* of the state." Legal segregation is doomed. The committee seems to suggest, without actually saying so, that it supports "segregation by covenant" (whatever that is!) and that it depends upon "natural preferences and antipathies" to preserve the identity of the two races. Without declaring for an ultimate goal, the Report stresses a doctrine of "gradualism," based upon necessity because "the forces of opposition fight over every acre of ground, yielding only an inch at a time." At one point the Report speaks of "our progress toward equality," but in the next paragraph it urges all to "work toward all possible accomplishment under the separate but equal doctrine now in effect, . . . (working) out by sheer logic and good conscience what our ultimate goal shall be. . ."

Despite these deficiencies, the Committee on Christian Social Relations of the Alabama Synod has done a remarkably good job within the limits it set for itself and has given committees of other Southern communions something to shoot at.

J. A. C.